

Seeking Mystical Experience

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/714>

Helen: Hi, James. First of all I want to thank you for your teachings – they have helped greatly along my journey. My main mode of practice has been the path of knowledge, influenced by Atmananda's *Atma Darshan*. Your *satsang* discussing the first ten chapters of this book was very helpful. It's too bad that you didn't get to complete it, as your 40 years of experience on the subject would have certainly helped clear up some rough edges of understanding the more subtle latter chapters of the book.

In any case, I have been running into the same recurring reaction in my body for the last couple of weeks now. There is a great bit of tension that wells up in my gut and chest region while meditating on the body.

James: Why are you meditating on the body? What do you hope to gain by it?

Helen: The body feels like “me” – a barrier between “me” and “not-me” – so I am allowing sensations to arise and simply be aware of them.

James: The body is not a barrier between “me” and “not-me.” It is “not-me.” If you are doing self-inquiry you take your attention away from the “not-me” and put it on the “me.”

Helen: Then I place my attention to that which is aware of these sensations. But very quickly these tensions start welling up.

James: The more you pay attention to the awareness of the sensations the more they will grow. Try to put your awareness on awareness, not on the awareness of the sensations.

Helen: It's definitely some kind of energy there moving around, as there is no way I can voluntarily cause the sheer force of these tensions. I can easily remove these tensions by focusing on something else.

James: Focus on something else. What do you hope to gain by focusing on this energy, these tensions? They are “not-me.”

Helen: My question is this: How should I deal with them?

Should I ignore them, focus my attention back on relaxing the body, and continue to stand as awareness from a relaxed place? Or should I focus on them, let them play out and see what

happens from there? Letting them play themselves out is hard to do while simultaneously placing attention on awareness, since the sheer force of them causes me to re-identify with the body.

I just don't know how to handle this situation. Part of me wants to see what happens with this tension, but I don't want to waste my time trying to see what happens with it if I don't have to.

James: Leave the tensions alone. It seems you are trying to manipulate them in some way as evidenced by the statement, "Letting them play themselves out..." Nothing is going to happen if you let them play out. You are wasting time meditating on energy.

Helen: Admittedly there is this desire to have some kind of mystical experience as a result of this energy build-up. That's why I was focusing on the body so much. I realize that experience is not the self, so there's no point in seeking it. I appreciate the response. Hey, the self has to go on vacation sometimes, right?

James: The self is the vacation, Helen. ☺ Yes, don't seek experience. Ask yourself why the experience you are having at moment is not suitable.

~ Love, James